

VZCZCXR05459

RR RUEHAG RUEHDF RUEHIK RUEHLZ RUEHROV

DE RUEHW #2230 3180652

ZNR UUUUU ZZH

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FM AMEMBASSY WARSAW

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5486

RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC 2025

RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS

INFO RUEHKW/AMCONSUL KRAKOW 1907

RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES

UNCLAS WARSAW 002230

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USDA FAS FOR OCRA/CURTIS, SEIDBAND; OSTA/MACKE, HAMILTON,  
OGA/CHAUDHRY

STATE FOR EUR/NCE, EUR/RUS, INR

BRUSSELS PASS AG MINISTER COUNSELOR;

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: POLISH PEOPLEQS PARTY (PSL) IN GOVERNING COALITION RAISES PROFILE OF AGRICULTURAL ISSUES

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

**¶1.** (U) Civic Platform (PO) led by Prime Minister-designate Donald Tusk will establish a coalition with the Polish PeopleQs Party (PSL) in order to form a new government. PO won PolandQs October Parliamentary election with 41.5 percent of the vote, with PSL garnering 9 percent. In November PSL will be given the leadership of the Ministry of Agriculture with Marek Sawicki named as Minister.

**¶2.** (U) Biographical Note: Marek Sawicki is from Sawice where he still owns a 62 acre rapeseed and wheat farm. He was educated in agronomy and has a post-graduate degree in EU agricultural law from the Polish Academy of Science. Sawicki joined PSL in 1990 and has served in the Polish Parliament since 1993. His position as Minister would be his first government post outside of the Parliament. In recent public comments he has indicated that his priorities include increasing small and medium-sized Polish farms access to EU funds and new technologies.

**¶3.** (U) The PSL platform on agriculture includes: strong support for direct EU payments to farmers through the CAP; more help for family farms by limiting support to large farms; support for increasing exports; and assistance to farmers adopting new technologies. Poland will likely remain steadfastly opposed to CAP reform as the cornerstone of PSLQs platform is to continue to direct EU payments to farmers.

**¶4.** (SBU) PSL has not taken a public stance on biotechnology and their leadership presents an opportunity to change PolandQs current strong political opposition. Although many politicians speak of Poland remaining a GM free country, the reality is that 300 hectares of MON810 were planted in southern Poland this year and demand for such products is growing as outbreaks of corn borer and root worm spread. Politically it is a sensitive issue with 70 percent of the public against the technology, but PSL draws its support from commercially productive farms and may be more willing to take a pragmatic stance on the current anti-biotech feed and seed laws.

**¶5.** (SBU) PSLQs leadership in the new government is expected to extend beyond SawickiQs appointment to Agriculture, and may bring a few agricultural issues greater attention such as biofuels, biotechnology, and EU integration. PSLQs chairman, Waldemar Pawlak, will be tapped to be Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Economy. Still to be decided, PSL may be given leadership of the Ministry of Environment, with Stanislaw Zelichowski a strong candidate for Minister. Dr. Henryk Jasiorowski, a well-connected and influential figure in Polish agriculture, commented that PSLQs influence on national agricultural policies will be greater than

previous minority coalition partners (such as Samoobrona which headed Agriculture during the previous government). Its influence may not be felt immediately. Jasiorowski and other trade sources agree that due to the procedures for forming the new government and the upcoming holidays, it will not be fully-constituted and working until January 2008.

¶6. (SBU) Undersecretary of Agriculture Jan Ardanowski agreed that PSL will have more influence than its immediate predecessor, Samoobrona.

Ardanowski told emboffs that the current government will not do much for the new Minister, but confirmed that the Minister-designate has a strong commitment to biofuels, increasing EU payments to farmers, and might consider some moderation of the nationQs stance against biotechnology.

¶7. (SBU) Comment: Ambassador Ashe will extend an invitation to Minister Sawicki to attend the Ministerial-level Washington International Renewable Energy Conference (WIREC) to be held in Washington D.C. March 4-6, 2008, an invitation that was declined previously by Minister Wojciech Mojzesowicz, and not extended to SamoobronaQs controversial leader, Andrzej Lepper. Embassy recommends that USDAQs new Secretary, once confirmed, meet with Minister Sawicki either on the margins of the WIREC conference or in Poland, based on our nationQs long history of cooperation in agriculture and PolandQs commitment to the global war on terror. End Comment.

ASHE